March Comes in Like a Lion

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Chapter 60

Midday Moon

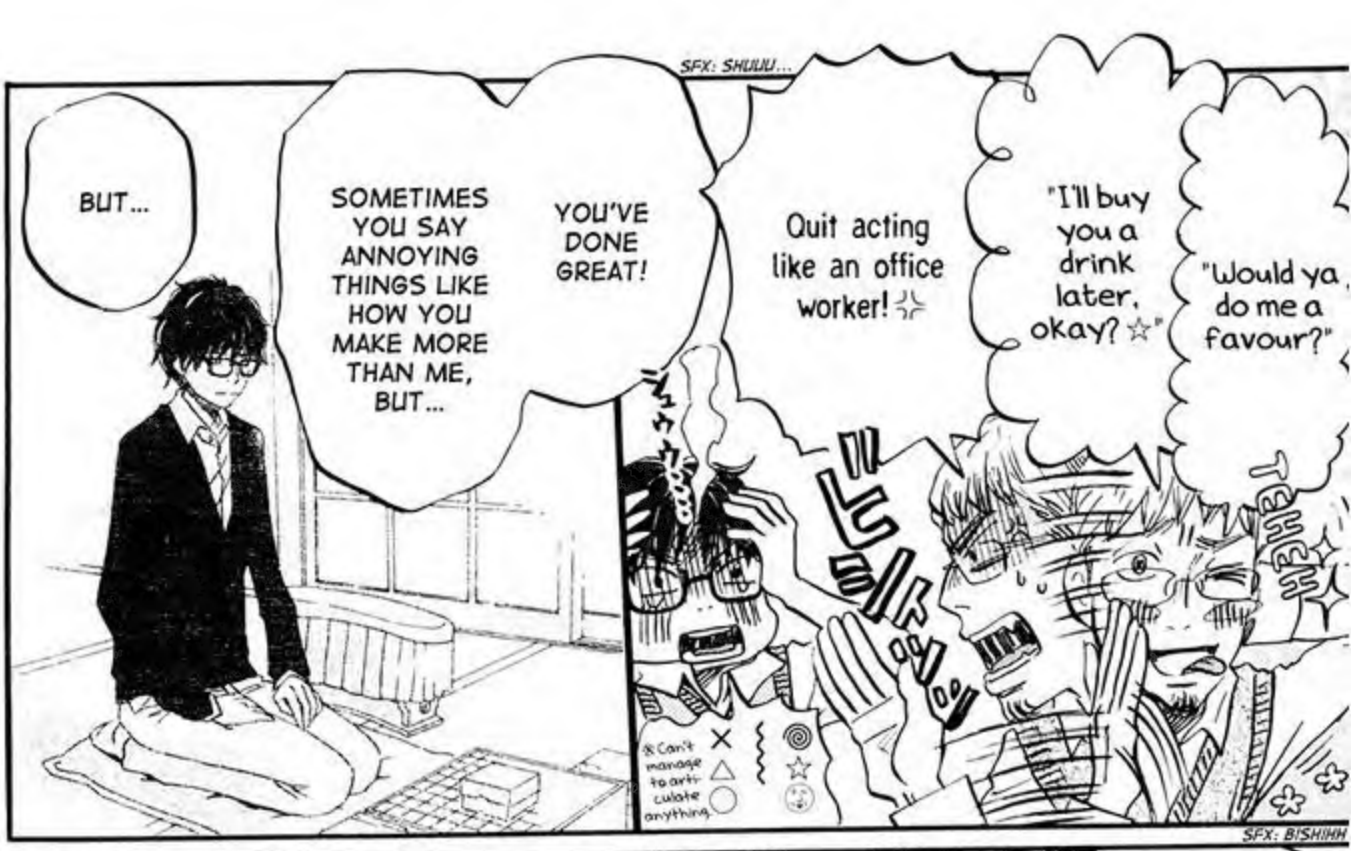
3月のライオン

March comes in like a lion
Chica Umino

SFX: GATAAANNN
What's that homeroom teacher's name?!
WHERE?! TO THAT MIDDLE SCHOOL!!
I'M GONNA GO!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
WHAT THE HELL?!
WAAAH
SFX: KUWAHH
SENSEI!! PLEASE DON'T GO ON A RAMPAGE!!
KYAA
PLEASE DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICE.
HOW AWFUL THAT TEACHER IS!!
JUST FROM HEARING ABOUT ALL OF THIS, I CAN TELL
IT'S CLEAR WHY THE BIG SISTER IS SO WORRIED!!
GAAAH
SFX: YUSA YUSA (SWAYING)

I SHOULD REALLY JUST GO!! I MEAN, LET ME GO, KIRIYAMA!
AS A FELLOW TEACHER, I'VE GOT A THING OR TWO I WANNA SAY TO THAT HOMEROOM TEACHER!
Roooar
SENSEI! PLEASE CALM DOWN!
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. I MEAN, I...
I WANT TO GO, TOO!!
BUT,
I DON'T HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE TO HANDLE IT!
I WOULDN'T BE OF ANY USE!
I MEAN, WITH ME, I WOULD ALWAYS JUST ISOLATE MYSELF AND PRETEND EVERYTHING WAS FINE.
I WOULDN'T PUT UP ANY SORT OF FIGHT. I'D JUST PUT UP WITH IT, GO WITH THE FLOW,
AND ESCAPE INTO SHOGI...
SO, I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA HOW
OR ANY WAY TO HELP IN A TIME LIKE THIS!!

SO I THOUGHT...
IF I COULD JUST EARN SOME MONEY FROM MATCHES...
THEN, SHE COULD USE THAT FOR SOMETHING... SO I WORKED REALLY HARD AT IT.
BUT THE PEOPLE OF THAT FAMILY WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN MONEY FROM A TOTAL STRANGER LIKE ME.
SO SENSEI, PLEASE TELL ME!
I'LL TREAT YOU TO ODEN OR YAKINIKU OR WHATEVER YOU WANT!!
PLEASE LEND ME YOUR WISDOM!!
SFX: BISHIH
OW!!
YOU LUNK-HEAD!
KIRIYAMA!!

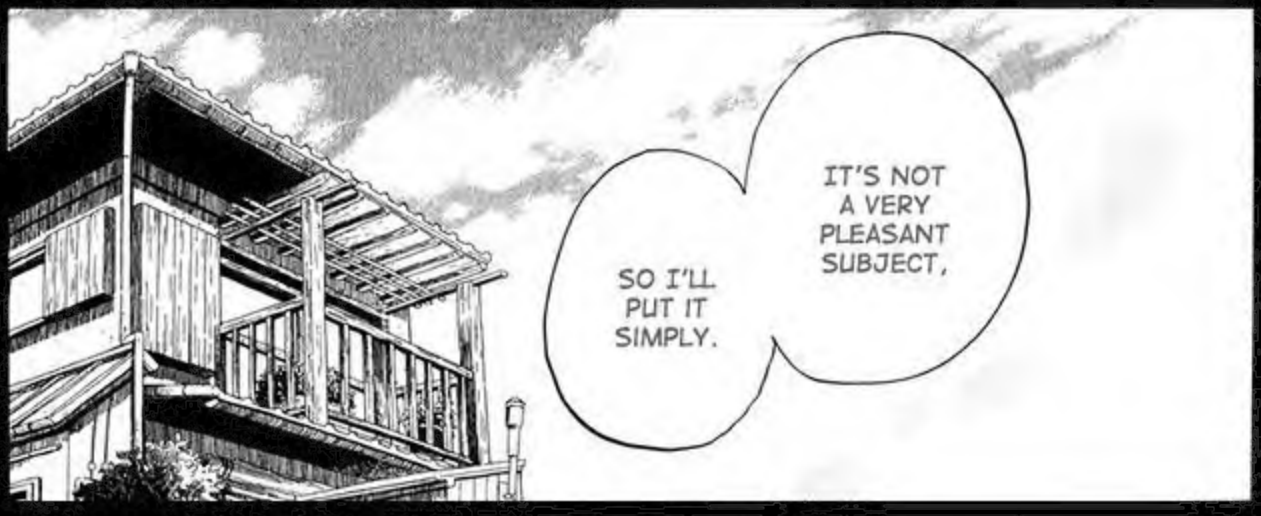

SFX: SHUUU...
BUT...
SOMETIMES YOU SAY ANNOYING THINGS LIKE HOW YOU MAKE MORE THAN ME, BUT...
YOU'VE DONE GREAT!
Quit acting like an office worker!
"I'll buy you a drink later, okay?"
"Would ya do me a favour?"
TEHEH
*Can't manage to articulate anything.

SFX: BISHIHH
AND I'M A TEACHER!
DON'T MAKE LIGHT OF TEACHERS, OKAY?!
THIS IS A SCHOOL,
YOU'RE STILL JUST A SECOND YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT,

THE HEAD TEACHER IN CHARGE OF HER YEAR OR THE TEACHER OF A DIFFERENT SUBJECT.
FIRST, I THINK HINA-CHAN SHOULD TRY TO FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO TALK TO.
OKAY...

THE HOME-ROOM TEACHER ISN'T THE ONLY ONE IN THE SCHOOL.
SO, WITH RESPECT TO MEETING THE OTHER SIDE'S PARENTS...
IF TALKING TO HER DOESN'T WORK, SHE CAN JUST TRY TALKING TO OTHER TEACHERS.
BUT IF IT DOES, I SUPPOSE HINA-CHAN'S BIG SISTER WOULD HAVE TROUBLE FACING THEM ON HER OWN.
BY THE LOOK OF THINGS, I DON'T THINK IT'D COME TO THAT.
SO, WHAT ABOUT THE FATHER? WHAT'S HE DOING?
THEIR MOTHER PASSED AWAY, HUH?

.....
WELL...


IT'S NOT A VERY PLEASANT SUBJECT,
SO I'LL PUT IT SIMPLY.

SFX: POPOPOPO...

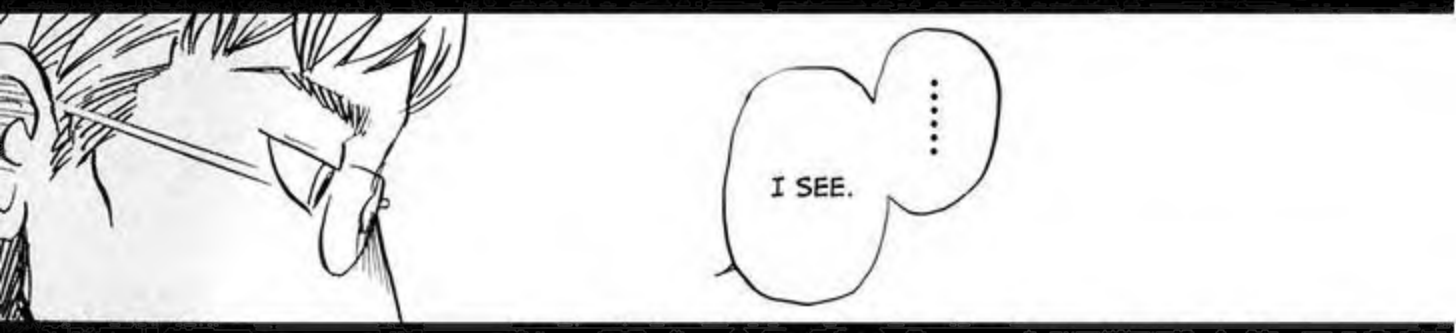
The way she said it,

it was as if it meant nothing to her.

I realised that Akari-san's heart was adrift somewhere,

unable to find a place to settle.

It wasn't that it no longer meant anything to her.



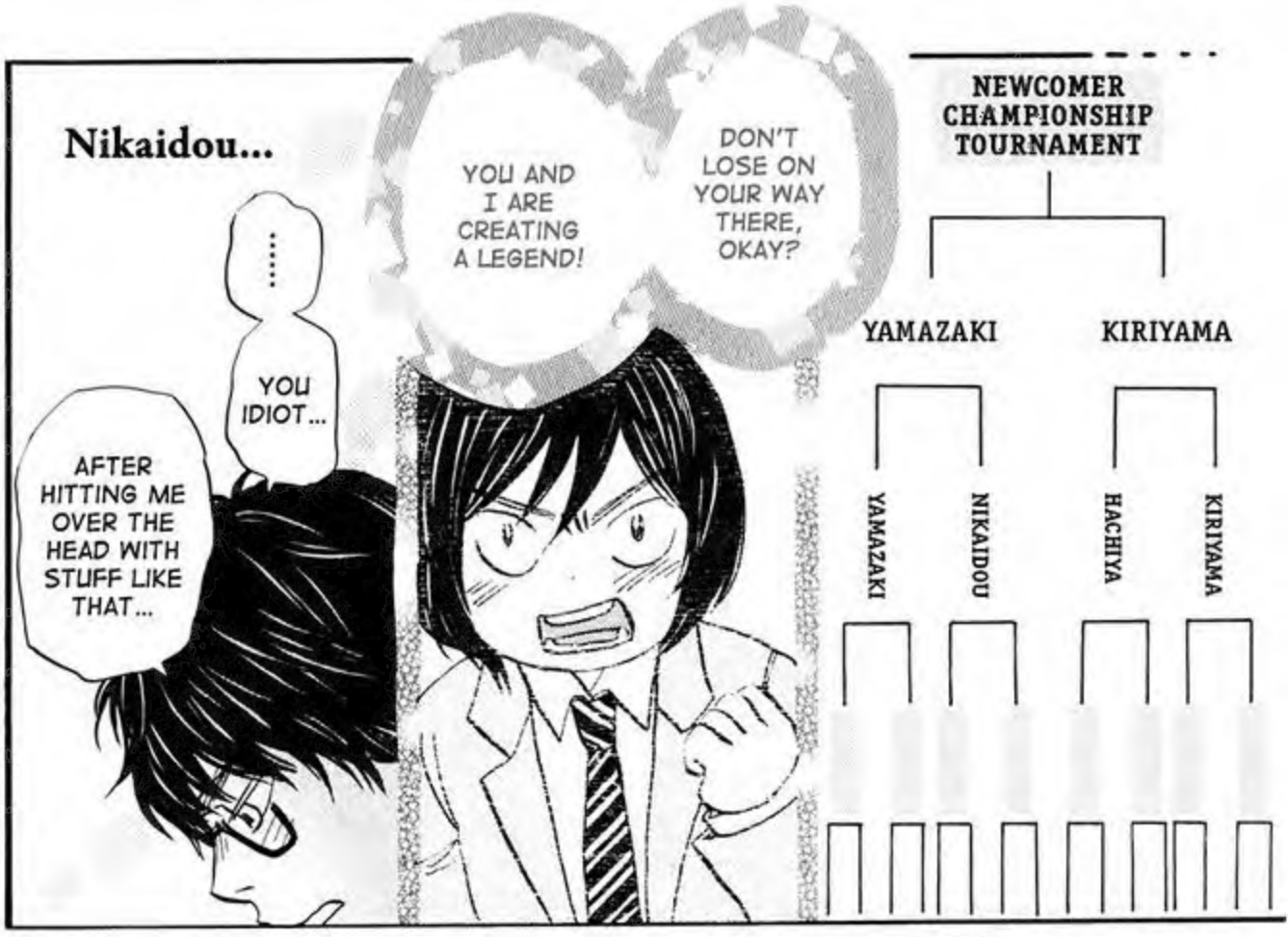
It was still just the only way she could talk about it.

—IT'S LOOKING WORSE AND WORSE BUT I'M JUST GONNA HAVE TO GO.
UMMM...

And then he patted me on the back and said,
"I want to be needed".
"So I want to be stronger."
What's so wrong about that?
All you've got to do
is to do the things you can do, one at a time.

Take a deep breath,
and move one step at a time...
he said.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

HEY, KIRI-YAMA.
THAT'S THREE WINS, ISN'T IT? YOU'RE DOING PRETTY WELL FOR YOURSELF.
AH, YOKO-MIZO-SAN...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I HEARD YOUR OPPONENT IN THE NEWCOMER CHAMPION-SHIP FINALS IS GOING TO BE YAMAZAKI JUNKEI...
GOOD LUCK.
DO IT FOR NIKAIDOU, TOO...
YEAH.


Nikaidou...
YOU AND I ARE CREATING A LEGEND!
DON'T LOSE ON YOUR WAY THERE, OKAY?
NEWCOMER CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT
YAMAZAKI
KIRIYAMA
YAMAZAKI
NIKAIDOU
HACHIYA
KIRIYAMA
YOU IDIOT...
AFTER HITTING ME OVER THE HEAD WITH STUFF LIKE THAT...

SO,
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH NIKAIDOU?
IS HE NOT COMING BACK FROM OSAKA FOR A WHILE?
THAT'S RIGHT.
HE'S GOING TO BE STAYING AT THE OSAKA CENTRAL FIRST HOSPITAL FOR A WHILE...
JUST SO THEY CAN OBSERVE HIM FOR A BIT.
APPARENTLY, MOVING HIM WOULD POSE SOMEWHAT OF A PROBLEM.

SHIMADA-SAN.
...WHAT
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
KIRI-YAMA...
将棋会館
将棋会館
Chapter 60 END

WHAT KIND OF SHOGI COMPETITION IS THE "NEWCOMER KING CHAMPIONSHIP" FROM THIS MANGA?!

The Newcomer King Championship is a traditional (now on its 42nd year) shogi competition sponsored by Shinbun Akahata. Just as its name suggests, it is a competition for young shogi players. And becoming the champion of this tournament is said to be a gateway to becoming a first-class shogi player.

The age limit has changed several times, but currently only players 26 and below are allowed. No one 6-dan and above qualifies to enter either. There are special exceptions for this tournament which allow amateurs and members of the Shourei-kai to participate, as well as up to four female players. Since only players younger than 26 are allowed, this means younger female players who are not at the top have a chance as well.

In last year's (2010's) Newcomer King Championship, there was some commotion. The winner was Abe Kenjirou 4-dan from Yamagata Prefecture. This was a reasonable result, but the real shock was that an amateur, Kaku Hiroyoshi-san, was the runner-up. The final match is three games long and with one win and one loss each, they entered a final tiebreaker. Just one more win and an amateur would have become the Newcomer King.

The year before that, the present King, Hirose Akihito won. Going down the list in order, the previous winners were Satou Amahiko, Murayama Yasuaki, and Itadani Tesurou, all young players with hopeful futures. The year before that, the winner was Watanabe Akira Ryuuou.

In this manga, Yamazaki Jyunkei-kun has won the championship four times, but there is no real-life player who has ever won four times. The highest record is three times by Moriyasu Hidemitsu 9-dan, Moriuchi Toshiyuki 9-dan, and Fujii Takeshi 9-dan. By the way, Yoshiharu Meijin only won it once. It is believed that this is because the champions frequently end up taking other titles and so become disqualified from participating again.

The title of "Eternal Newcomer King"... I'm not sure whether it exists or not. But I doubt there will ever emerge a five time winner of the championship. It's likely that before anyone can win five times, they'll be disqualified from entering for some other reason.

Also, a special characteristic of this competition is an account of all the games running in a newspaper. For newcomers, receiving a high enough placement to be featured in a newspaper is very difficult, which is part of what makes this competition popular.

By the way, I don't have any experience winning this championship. I had a rather brazen appearance ever since I was young so my senpais always used to tease me about how I was unsuited to be Newcomer King. But looking back on it now that I can no longer participate, it seems like that was a missed opportunity.